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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR PM, EUR/WE AND EUR/RPM
OSD FOR DASD HOEHN
EUCOM FOR ODC-SPAIN AND RADM GOODWIN

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SUBJECT: BLOOMFIELD DELEGATION UPDATES SPANISH ON GLOBAL
DEFENSE POSTURE REVIEW PLANS

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission J. Robert Manzanares,
reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Lincoln Bloomfield and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy Andrew Hoehn briefed GOS officials June 15 on the latest USG thinking on the global defense posture review (GDPR) and its possible impact on Spain. Bloomfield and Hoehn said the USG was not likely to consolidate NAVEUR and the Sixth Fleet at Rota Naval Air Station. Due to cost and efficiency considerations, the U.S. was considering alternatives to Spain for the consolidation. Hoehn added that at this time the USG was not contemplating significant reductions in personnel at either Rota or Moron Air Base as a result of GDPR. The Spanish appreciated the briefing and emphasized the base relationship was very important to Spain. The GOS sought more detailed information on GDPR and Bloomfield said a member of the U.S. delegation could return to brief further once the delegation had apprised other affected countries of the latest U.S. plans. End summary.

12. (C) The Bloomfield delegation met at the Foreign Ministry in a single meeting with the Foreign Ministry's political director, Rafael Dezcallar, the Defense Ministry's director general for policy, Gen. Felix Sanz, and the Presidency's Maria Jesus Alonso (no. 2 to NSA Casajuana). Bloomfield briefed the Spanish on general GDPR concepts and explained that the foundation for the global review was the political dimension. He added he was following up on Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Doug Feith's visit to Spain in December 2003. Recalling that Feith had suggested the U.S. might consolidate NAVEUR and the Sixth Fleet at Rota, Hoehn said the U.S. appreciated Spain's positive response to the idea but said cost and efficiency reasons were now causing the U.S. to examine alternatives to Rota for NAVEUR and the Sixth Fleet. Hoehn declined to specify where NAVEUR and the Sixth Fleet might lodge, until the relevant government could be briefed. (Later in the discussion, General Sanz noted press reports that the Sixth Fleet and NAVEUR would move to Naples.)

13. (C) Hoehn emphasized Rota and Moron remain important, enduring and sustainable elements of the U.S.-Spain relations and NATO. He said that while local or regional commanders had the authority to make changes to maximize efficiency, Hoehn assured the Spanish the U.S. has no current plans to make significant changes to its presence at either base as a result of the posture review. Hoehn said also the U.S. was still considering various locations at which to consolidate Special Operations Forces; we would provide the Spanish additional details on that score when they were available.

14. (C) Dezcallar replied that Spain understood the cost and efficiency realities and would likely make the same decision were it in the U.S.'s shoes. He agreed the political dimension should be the foundation for GDPR discussions with allies and assured the delegation the U.S. "has a strong foundation in Spain," and that Spain wished to strengthen the relationship and take it as far as "our common interests take us." Spain wants to continue cooperating with the U.S. at the highest levels, said Dezcallar.

15. (C) Sanz said the "51-year (military) relationship" between Spain and the U.S. has been very fruitful for both countries, and that the countries' relationship at the bases was very important for Spain. Sanz requested more details both on the parts of GDPR that affect Spain and the elements that affect other countries. Spain is of course concerned about the review's impact on Rota and Moron, and in particular the effect on "social issues" and Spanish jobs.

16. (C) Bloomfield explained that U.S. representatives were visiting a number of countries to discuss GDPR ramifications and preferred not to get into details before meeting with other governments. After the USG had held those discussions, however, the U.S. would be happy to send a member of the Bloomfield delegation -- probably a EUCOM rep -- back to Spain to go into greater detail on GDPR's impact on Spain. However, the U.S. was interested in the GOS's views on our proposals now, or as soon as possible.

17. (C) Comment: The atmosphere at this meeting was very positive, with the Spanish emphasizing the importance of positive relations with the U.S. and saying they appreciated being consulted on the posture review. Conspicuously absent from the GOS reaction to the briefing was the military's oft-repeated position that the base relationship is too lopsided in the U.S.'s favor. Instead, Spanish officials expressed concern about the possible negative impact GDPR could have on Spanish jobs and infrastructure projects at the bases. As is inevitable of late here in Madrid, where any and every issue related to foreign policy reaches the press, Spain, well-versed media reported on the visit, though there were no media present at the meeting and no press event afterward. Press on the visit has been interesting: One newspaper, Spain's conservative ABC, gave an accurate account of the discussion, including the idea that Sixth Fleet and NAVFLEX might not go to Rota. Spain's leftist, pro-Socialist El Pais reported just the opposite -- increases in the offing for Rota. When queried by the press about the Bloomfield delegation's visit to Madrid, First Vice President de la Vega said the GOS "does not have any knowledge of any extraordinary request" from the U.S. relating to Rota or Moron.

ARGYROS